

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSM-03 IO-13 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 AID-05 EB-08

COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 STR-07 AGRE-00 OES-07

INT-05 /151 W

-----114314 131934Z /42

R 122036Z APR 78

FM USINT HAVANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1614

INFO USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 0944

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT CU IZ

SUBJECT: IRAQI BAATH PART MOVES TO ESTABLISH TIES WITH CUBAN CP

1. IRAQI FIRST SECRETARY (AL-ARAB), APRIL 12, INDICATED THAT STEPS ARE IN TRAIN TO ESTABLISH DIRECT PART-TO-PARTY RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAQI BAATH PARTY AND CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY (CP).

AL-ARAB OPINED THAT SUCH TIES MIGHT LESSEN CUBA'S NORMAL TENDENCY TO SUPPORT PRO-MOSCOW IRAQI (CP. (FYI CUBAN OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER GRANMA, MARCH 31, CARRIED SHORT PIECE ON ANNIVERSARY OF IRAQI CP WHICH GAVE APPEARANCE OF PLACING IRAQI CP ON PAR WITH BAATH. END FYI) (COMMENT: CUBANS MAY BE USING WHATEVER TIES THEY MAINTAIN WITH SYRIAN BAATH - SEE DAMASCUS 1997 - AS MEANS TO PRESSURE IRAQIS TOWARD EQUIVALENT OR BETTER TIES.)

2. AL-ARAB REMARKED THAT, IN RECENT AND COMING WEEKS, IRAQI DELEGATIONS IN AREAS OF MEDICINE, TRADE, AND FISHING HAD OR WOULD BE VISITING CUBA. MEDICAL GROUP, ACCORDING TO AL-ARAB, INVOLVED SOME 15 STUDENTS WHO HAVE RECEIVED

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SHORT-TERM TRAINING HERE. (FYI CANADIAN EMBASSY HAS INDICATED THAT IRAQI GROUP - APPARENTLY IDENTICAL TO GROUP CITED HERE - IS TRANSITING CANADA FROM CUBA IN NEXT FEW DAYS. GROUP APPARENTLY WAS DESCRIBED TO CANADIANS AS COMPOSED OF EMPLOYEES OF IRAQI MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, NOT MEDICAL STUDENTS. TRUE NATURE OF IRAQI GROUP MAY, THEREFORE, BE OPEN TO QUESTION END FYI) ARAB SAID THAT

IRAQI TRADE GROUP WOULD DEAL WITH PURCHASE OF CUBAN SUGAR UNDER EXISTING MEDIUM-TERM AGREEMENT AS WELL AS TROPICAL FRUIT SUCH AS TAMARINDS. (COMMENT: AL-ARAB MENTIONED THAT IRAQ MIGHT BE TOYING WITH IDEA OF EXPANDING AUSTRALIAN SUGAR PURCHASES.) ON FISHING, AL-ARAB SAID THAT CUBANS ARE PREPARED TO OFFER TECHNICAL COOPERATION TO SPUR DEVELOPMENT OF IRAQI FISHING INDUSTRY.

3. AL-ARAB STATED THAT IRAQI AMBASSADOR TO CUBA ANWAR S.A. AL-RACHAD HAD BEEN RECONFIRMED IN HIS POST AFTER RECENT TRIP TO BAGHDAD FOR CONFERENCE OF IRAQI AMBASSADORS IN THIRD WORLD (COMMENT: AL-RACHAD HAD REPORTEDLY BEEN SLATED FOR REMOVAL AS PART OF UPGRADING OF IRAQI EMBASSY STAFF THAT OCCURRED HERE.)
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